

2016/17

Queen Mary University of London  
**Students' Union**



# Impact Report

QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
STUDENTS' UNION

[WWW.QMSU.ORG](http://WWW.QMSU.ORG)



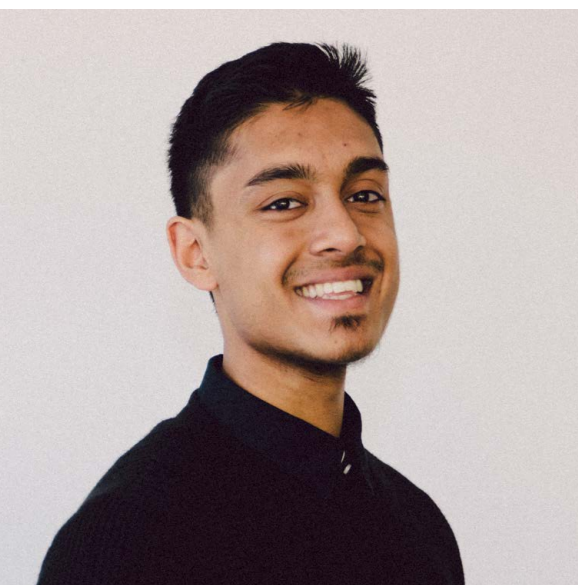
## Introduction

Queen Mary University of London Students' Union (the Union) is a registered student-led charity that works to improve the student experience of Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) students. The academic year 2016/17 has been yet another outstanding year for the Union! The Union has continued to see record levels of engagement in its activities, including the highest ever voter turnout in the Union Elections. There were also multiple successes for our student-led groups,

locally, nationally and internationally, and the Union led high impact campaigns including "Freeze our Fees" and "Be Kind to Your Mind", a new campaign focusing on wellbeing and mental health. This report showcases just some of the things the Union is most proud of over the 2016/17 academic year, however there is so much more. To find out more please visit:

[www.qmsu.org](http://www.qmsu.org)

## President's Opening Remarks



*Yas Yeahiu*  
PRESIDENT 2017/18

In the final year of our Strategic Plan, the Students' Union has been shaping its focus around the diversity and creativity of our student body. We have really been trying to encapsulate student ideas and developing a strong partnership into practice. I am buzzing with the amount of engagement we currently have, from our highest ever election turnout, to the election of an all BME sabbatical team, we have begun to really reflect our diverse student body. The Impact Report is a snapshot of just some of the Union's achievements over the past year.

With the new strategic plan to be launched in January 2018, we really want to be at the heart of students' lives with a focus on visibility, welfare, and crucially employability. We want our new strategic plan to have an integrated approach, that not only works to build and foster relationships within QMSU, but also work together, collectively with students to truly improve their lives.



### Mission

THE UNION'S MISSION IS:

**TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LIVES**

### Vision

THE UNION'S VISION IS:

For all students to feel part of a Queen Mary community where they can develop, are supported and can make changes on issues that affect them.

## Values

THE UNION'S  
VALUES ARE:

### Student Led & Democratic

The Union should always have at its heart that it is run for students by students. This means making sure students have the opportunity to lead the Union and make decisions.

### Diverse & Inclusive

The student body is very diverse and the Union and its activities should reflect this so that it is inclusive of the whole student body.

### Open & Accessible

Students should always feel that they are able to approach the Union and that it will be responsive to their needs. The Union should be open and accessible in all of its activities.

### Progressive & Creative

The Union wants to ensure that it is constantly developing to meet the needs of its student body. This includes finding creative solutions in a time when available resources are stretched.

### Welcoming & Fun

The Union has a responsibility to provide the social side of the student experience. Students should want to get involved with the Union because they know it's going to be fun and welcoming.



# Aim 1: Students will feel like they belong to a community

The Union is committed to making sure every QMUL student feels they belong to a community during their time at University. Key to the success of the Union creating communities is running initiatives centrally, as well as providing the support and resources for students to develop and deliver communities through affiliated student groups.

The Union ran a series of events to help establish communities between different groups of students. Many of these events were included as part of our brand new "Try Something New" programme of alcohol free events and activities. QM International (1000 attendees) and our Great Gatsby Graduation Ball (800 attendees) were also highlights.

## Highlights

**£113,731**  
raised by Mile End and Whitechapel RAG groups for charitable causes

**940**  
students volunteered in the local community

**1966**  
students involved in international, cultural, postgraduate and commuting student societies, a 20% increase

**92%**  
Mile End academic societies ran at least 4 events during the year

**2262**  
international students attended Union-led events

**286**  
societies affiliated to the Union - the highest ever number

### Best Bar None

At the Tower Hamlets Best Bar None Awards, Drapers and the Griff Inn were awarded the Best Newcomer Award. The award recognises excellence in the responsible management of venues, and highlights the hard work the Union puts in to making its Venues a safe space for all. The year saw record attendances at our events and a new sales record, as well as a brand new food offering that was a hit with students.



Obj 1.1

GRADUATION BALL 2017

### Academic Volunteering Opportunities

Since 2014/15 there has been a 29% increase in the availability of academic volunteering opportunities in Schools. The Union has developed and maintained partnerships with 7 Schools at Queen Mary, and QMSU Volunteering has also worked with other departments, including QMUL Sustainability and pre-Sessional students to increase awareness and engagement in community volunteering.



Obj 1.2

SAFETY DAY VOLUNTEER 2017

### International sporting success

It was a great year for Sporting Success. The Men's Barbell Team travelled to South Africa to participate in the World University Powerlifting Championships, following previous success in the British Championships. The team achieved an incredible 3rd place, with every participant beating their previous best. The QM Angels Cheerleading Team also saw success, taking home Silver in the European Cheerleading Championships. All members of the teams train at our Qmotion Sports & Fitness Centre.

Obj 1.3

### Community Sport

Community Sport has continued to grow, and has seen 1071 people participate in their Community Sport Football programme, with over 225 hours being logged in the community enabling others to participate. The Community Sport programme was shortlisted for "Workforce Programme of the Year" at the 2017 British University and College (BUCS) Awards in recognition of the impact the programme has had on the development of students' skills and employability. This was an incredible achievement, especially as there was a total of 246 nominations.



Obj 1.5

COMMUNITY SPORT FOOTBALL

### Formula Student Success

The Formula Student Society raced at Silverstone at the 20th UK Formula Student Championships. Teams of students designed, built and developed their car. The team did incredibly well and also won the "Best Newcomer Award".

Obj 1.4

### Raise and Give

There has been a large increase in the number of student groups participating in the Union's Adopt a Charity scheme. There was a 298% increase in RAG totals across both campuses, with a total of £113,731 being raised for good causes. The Islamic Society and Muslim Medics and Dentistry societies raised £62,778 during their Charity Week.

Obj 1.5

## You said

The Union should play an active role in encouraging students to have their say in the UK General Election.

## We did

The Union led an impactful campaign encouraging students to get registered to and make an informed vote.

## Aim 2:

### Student life will be better because of the Union

Firmly rooted as the core purpose of the Union is the advancement of education for QMUL students. The Union is constantly listening to and responding to the needs of students through running campaigns and lobbying QMUL and external groups. Multiple campaigns were delivered

throughout the year by student officers, including the Scream Mary campaign tackling accommodation and library overcrowding issues, Pride Week, Green Week and joining the national "Students Not Suspects" and NSS Boycott campaigns.

#### Highlights

**5160**

voters in the Union elections. Turnout hit a record 26.3% - our highest ever and an increase of 5.7% on the previous year.

**75%**

satisfaction rate with our Academic Advice Service

**1795**

signatures received for the "Freeze our Fees" campaign petition

**68.5%**

of students believe the Union is empowering them to make change.

**4500**

students responded to our Red Brick Research Big Change survey

**70%**

feel the Union is helping students to make changes on issues that are affecting their University experience



STUDENT OFFICERS PROMOTING TACKLE AND TALK

#### Obj 2.1, 2.3

##### 24/7 Library Opening Hours

Elected officers have been campaigning for a number of years for the extension of opening hours at Mile End Library, and it was finally announced that from September 2017 the Library will be open 24/7, a huge win for the Union. The Executive Officers are now working to extend the opening hours of the Whitechapel Library.

#### Obj 2.2, 2.5

##### Understanding our membership & segmentation

In January 2017, the Union partnered with Red Brick Research to find out more about our students through a Strategic Member Research and Segmentation project. The research resulted in the Union gaining an improved understanding of students, and identified numerous opportunities for engagement. Over 4500 students responded to the "Big Change" survey, the highest ever response to a Union survey.

#### Obj 2.7

##### Cap the Costs Campaign

We believe all students should have the opportunity to celebrate their time and achievements at Queen Mary. As a result, and in response to student feedback, the Union made funding available to cover the cost of caps and gowns for 63 students who otherwise would have struggled to meet the cost of Graduation and attend. It is hoped that this initiative will continue in future year.



Obj 2.1

Obj 2.2

2016-17 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS RECEIVING AWARD

##### Freeze our Fees Campaign

Elected officers met with and lobbied the QMUL Senior Leadership Team on a number of occasions to speak against proposals to increase tuition fees for current students. As a result of the Union's highly impactful and effective "Freeze our Fees" campaign, the University committed to not increase fees for current home and EU students. The campaign won "Campaign of the Year" at the NUS Awards 2017.

#### Obj 2.3, 2.8

##### New commitment to Sustainability

Student Council voted in 2016 to create a part-time Sustainability Officer role, and in the 2015/16 March elections, students voted for their first ever Sustainability Officer. The Union has also undertaken several new green initiatives, focusing around sourcing ethical and sustainable coffee and by introducing new, recyclable coffee cups with dedicated bins. The Union also won "Gold" in the Green Mary Awards and was awarded "Good" in the NUS Green Impact scheme.

#### Obj 2.8, 4.1

##### Union launches new sustainable & ethical coffee

The Union introduced a new coffee blend, selecting a coffee that's grown and picked in a sustainable way and gives back to the communities where it is grown. The coffee sourced directly from the Rwandan hills supports the communities where the coffee beans are grown, with the Union also being able to directly support 10 children with their education.

#### Obj 2.3, 2.6

##### The Union's first Trans Representative

In February 2017, Student Council passed a motion to create the position of a part-time Trans Representative. Statistically, Queen Mary has a larger Trans community than any other Russell Group University and trans students face many issues including transphobia and accessing healthcare. The Union now has its first ever Trans Representative!

#### Obj 2.3, 2.7

##### Tackling the stigma around Mental Health

This year's Merger Cup saw the #TackleandTalk campaign launched, which aimed to tackle stigma around mental health problems in sport. Sports clubs showed their support by wearing purple wristbands, sock tape, stamps, temporary tattoos and stickers, and spreading the word on social media. The Union also ran a series of colourful art-inspired activities for World Mental Health Day, and fundraised for the mental health charity, Mind.

#### You said

The cost of printing at University was too high

#### We did

We introduced a new free printer in the Students' Union Hub.



## Aim 3: To prepare students for life beyond QMUL

Aim 3 of the Union strategic plan is more than just about improving students' employability; it's about helping students to develop as well-rounded individuals. The Union runs excellent student activities and services which give QMUL students

the opportunities to develop and learn. The QM Skills Award has continued to develop and see increased levels of engagement, and the Union has also started new initiatives to further diversify the way it provides opportunities to students.



STUDENT STAFF  
AT GET ACTIVE  
POP-UP STALL

### Highlights

46  
employability &  
reflective sessions  
delivered for the QM  
Skills Award

84%  
of the Union's  
Student Staff feel  
the Union has helped  
them to develop  
professionally.

74%  
of Skills Award  
participants felt  
more confident  
about their future  
career prospects

248  
student staff were  
employed by the  
Union

553  
one day volunteering  
opportunities

600+  
students from 286  
different groups  
attended The Big  
Hello training event

#### Obj 3.1 and 3.2

##### Expanding our internship opportunities

The Union continued to create new opportunities for students to undertake valuable paid work experience in the Union. New roles in Marketing and Societies were created, whilst opportunities in Sports Development and Sports Participation were continued.

#### Obj 3.1

##### New Student Media Spaces open

The Union opened a new, fully accessible Media Suite and Radio Station in the Hub. Student Media offers the chance for students to get involved in journalism, radio, design, TV broadcasting and photography. The spaces offer a new home for our 7 Media outlets to flourish and enables students looking to develop a career in the media the practical and employability skills they need.

#### Obj 3.3

##### Developing our Student Staff

The Union is dedicated to investing in and supporting our team of Student Staff. Last year, 84% of Student Staff felt the Union's induction, training and support had helped them develop professionally, well above our original strategic target. 24% also participated in the QM Skills Award.

#### Obj 3.1, 3.2

##### QM Skills Award continues to grow

Students who take leadership, representative or paid positions in the Union have the opportunity to take part in the QM Skills Award. This year saw a 51% increase in participants completing the Skills Award. 215 students benefited from a total of 46 employability training and reflective sessions. There was a significant increase in postgraduate and international students participating.

#### Obj 3.3

##### All our Student staff are now paid the London Living Wage

Following years of campaigning by students and elected officers, the Union began paying all of its staff the London Living Wage, as defined by the Living Wage Foundation. The Living Wage is based on the amount of money people need to live on in London, and will be hugely beneficial to the hundreds of student staff we employ.



STUDENT  
STAFF IN  
GROUND CAFE

#### Societies Excellence Award

The Societies Excellence Award started as a pilot scheme in September 2016 to develop, establish and reward societies for their contributions and achievements throughout the year. The scheme saw 30 submissions from societies. An additional £1000 in incentives was provided to student groups participating in the award through additional funding, marketing and promotional equipment, as well as access to photographers and videographers. The scheme was so successful it is now being rolled out to all Sports Clubs, Volunteering groups and Student Media outlets for 2017/18.



#### Obj 3.1

#### Obj 3.2

#### Obj 3.5

AFRICAN  
CARIBBEAN  
SOCIETY  
AT  
WELCOME  
FAIR

### You said

You wanted to be more informed about employability opportunities on campus

### We did

We introduced a new online Opportunities page detailing employability events, careers talks and internship roles available



## Aim 4:

### Students will know what the Union does and why it does it

Effective communications had a significant role in increasing the number of students engaging with the Union's services. Key to the Union being able to deliver for students is to tell them who we are, what we do and how we can make QMUL a better place. With the Union doing more and more, a student internship role was introduced to the team, helping to

increase our communications output, and deliver a successful welcome campaign. Significant efforts were also put in to making our communications more vibrant and enticing, with the Union's weekly email overhauled to a dynamic, image driven newsletter, and a new Student Videographer role introduced to help capture everything we do.



#### Obj 4.3

##### Launch of new Students' Union App

In response to student feedback, the Union launched its new app. The app allows students to easily join Clubs & Societies, buy event tickets and memberships, securely vote in Union Elections and keep up to date with the latest Union news. To date the app has had 1500 downloads across Android and iOS platforms. This is expected to grow further when new features are delivered including push notifications, check-ins and loyalty functions.

STUDENTS' UNION APP LAUNCH

#### Obj 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

##### New Welcome Campaign "Your Journey Starts Here"

Welcome communications were overhauled with a new themed campaign, "Your Journey Starts Here". In addition, International and Postgraduate students received Welcome Packs for the first time. The dedicated campaign was a huge success and led to a 20.57% growth in website views, 113,00 increase in Twitter impressions and increased participation and engagement across the Union's charitable and commercial services.

THE 2017 WELCOME PACK

#### Obj 4.2, 2.6

##### Making sure people know about the Executive Officers

This year, the Union has ensured students see dedicated communications from their Executive Officers throughout the year, so people know who they are and what they do. Initiatives included Union on Tour, regular video updates, a Festive Wishes video, new Executive Officer displays, a new Snapchat feed and termly "Your Voice" emails from the Executive Officers. Over 60% of students could identify at least two of the Executive Officers.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS PHOTOSHOOT

### Highlights

10,000+ students attended our biggest ever Union Welcome Fair

2.5+ million website page views

92% of students aware that profits from the commercial venues fund charitable services

1200 new likes on Facebook, and record levels of engagement

3500 views of the Union's Welcome Video



#### Obj 4.5

##### Celebrating Student Success

This year saw a renewed effort to celebrate the success of students and student groups across the Union. The introduction of our online Societies Spotlight and Sporting Focus, alongside our Union Awards in March are ways of showing students that their contributions have been recognised by the Union. Students and student groups involved in the Union were also nominated by staff for national awards, including the National Societies Awards.

NATIONAL SOCIETIES AWARDS 2017

#### Obj 4.1, 4.2

##### Our mission is clear

We have invested to ensure our mission is prominent in our venues, cafés, shops and spaces, to ensure students know what the Union is and what we do. It was great to see that, for the third year in a row, more students than ever before recognise what our mission statement is. Student Staff are more aware than ever of what our mission, vision and values are, with 94% identifying them correctly. In addition over 60% of students were able to identify our mission, meeting our Year Three strategic target.

ONE OF 3 NEW CUP DESIGNS INTRODUCED

### You said

You wanted to know more about what the Union does

### We did

The Union launched its new Snapchat channel as part of its core social media channels. It offered "behind the scenes" access to the Union, its officers and activities.





EDUCATION  
AWARDS 2017

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